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Message Text

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PAGE 01 FREETO 01967 031710Z

47
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 DRC-01 /134 W
---------- 119091
R 031612Z OCT 74
FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0257
INFO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
/AMEMBASSY LAGOS 889
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE FREETOWN 1967

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS PINT SL
SUBJECT: TREASON TRIAL

REF: FREETOWN 1869

1. TREASON TRIAL CONTINUING IN FOURTH WEEK WITH PROSECUTION STILL PRESENTING ITS CASE. TESTIMONY TO DATE A MIXTURE OF ACCOUNTS FROM WITNESSES, SOME OF WHOM STATE THEY WERE MINOR PARTICIPANTS IN PLOT, AND STATEMENTS MADE BY DEFENDANTS DURING EARLY DAYS OF THEIR DETENTION WHICH BEING SYSTEMATICALLY READ INTO TRIAL RECORD.

2. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPAL ACCUSED, FORMER FINANCE MINISTER MOHAMED SORIE FORNA, READ INTO RECORD SEPT 30, CONTAINED PLEA TO PRESIDENT FOR MERCY AND FOREGIVENESS FOR "WAYWARD CHILDREN AND PRODIGAL SONS." FORNA STATEMENT DENIED CLOSE INVOLVEMENT IN BOMBING OR OTHER ASPECTS OF PLOT AND SAID THAT TO EXTENT HE WAS INVOLVED HE WAS DRAGGED INTO IT THROUGH HIS ASSOCIATION WITH FORMER LIEUTENANT HABIB LANSANA KAMARA, THE SECOND ACCUSED, WHO EMPLOYED BY FORNA IN COMMERCIAL
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VENTURE FORNA ESTABLISHED AFTER RELEASE FROM DETENTION IN

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1973. IN STATEMENT FORNA ALLEGED THAT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WHEN POSSIBILITY OF COUP MENTIONED IN HIS PRESENCE HE WARNED AGAINST IT AS IMPRACTICAL AND SAID TO LEAVE HIM OUT, NOTING THAT HE HAD NOT ENJOYED THREE PREVIOUS YEARS IN DETENTION AND THAT IF FORMER ARMY COMMANDER HAD BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN COUP ATTEMPT IN 1971 THERE WAS NO REASON BELIEVE LESS COMPETENT ORGANIARS WOULD BE ABLE SUCCEED IN 1974.

3. INTERESTING ASPECT OF FORNA STATEMENT IS THAT GOSL HAS CHOSEN PRINT IT VERBATIM IN DAILY INFORMATION SERVICE REPORT ON TRIAL DESPITE INCLUSION OF REFERENCE TO NEPOTISM AND DISCONTENT IN ARMY, ABSENCE ANY OPPOSITION PARTIES OR OPPOSITION PRESS, AND POPULAR DISSATISFACTION WITH HIGH COST OF LIVING.
OLSON

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